





# UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND

## Introduction

In accordance with the Icelandic Quality Enhancement Framework at the University level in Iceland and the University of Iceland's Guidelines for the organization, schedule and process of institution-led review of faculties and interdisciplinary programs, the Faculty of Subject Teacher Education (the Faculty), School of Education (the School), University of Iceland (the University), carried out self-evaluation during the autumn semester of 2021 and into spring semester 2022. The results are presented in this report. A self-evaluation committee was established in September 2021.

The committee members were:

1. Freyja Hreinsdóttir, Head of Faculty, chair of the group
2. Hanna Óladóttir, Chair of the Department of Icelandic and foreign languages
3. Ásdís Ósk Jóelsdóttir, Chair of the department of Arts and design
4. Súsanna Margrét Gestsdóttir, Chair of the department of Upper secondary school teaching
5. Auður Pálsdóttir, Chair of the department of Social Science
6. Haukur Arason, Chair of the department of Mathematics, natural sciences and information technology
7. Erlingur Sigvaldason, B.Ed. student in Social Science Teaching in Compulsory School
8. Ragnheiður Birna Daníelsdóttir, MT student in Teaching Icelandic
9. Kristófer Gautason, M.Ed. student in Teaching Mathematics
10. Andri Rafn Ottesen, former student, Teacher in Garðaskóli, Garðabæ
11. Sigríður Pétursdóttir, Administrative Officer

Renata Emilsson Peskova, project manager, worked with the group.

The whole group had 4 meetings in November and December. During these meetings, issues that are common to all programmes were discussed. The departmental chairs and programme chairs worked on chapters related to each subject and corresponding programmes. During this work they had, in most cases, meetings with the teachers of the programme.

The Committee received data and information regarding students and faculty from University databases. The Social Science Research Institute provided quantitative data from the regular student satisfaction surveys and organised focus groups for both undergraduate and graduate students. The University of Iceland Centre for Teaching and Learning reviewed the Faculty's course catalogue descriptions, especially learning outcomes, and provided the Committee with that review.

Meetings were carried out with international external experts on 6-8 April providing a meaningful contribution to finalise the report.

## Faculty Characteristics

The Faculty of Subject Teacher Education is the only faculty in Iceland educating teachers to teach almost all subjects given in the Icelandic national curriculum guide for compulsory school. These include Icelandic, foreign languages, arts and crafts, natural sciences, social studies, mathematics, information and communication technology. The Faculty also educates future upper secondary school teachers in pedagogy at the master level after they have completed a Bachelor or a Master degree in their subjects. At the Faculty there are also programmes at Bachelor level that educate teachers for vocational education.

The Faculty collaborates closely with the Faculty of Education and Pedagogy that educates preschool and primary school teachers. It also has a collaboration with most other schools at the University of Iceland in the education of upper secondary school teachers.

The Faculty is divided into five Departments; Department of Icelandic and Foreign Languages, Department of Art and design (LVG), Department of Social science, Department of Mathematics, Natural sciences and Information technology, and Department of Upper secondary school teaching. Five faculty members have assigned duty as Department chairs. The faculty board consists of the head of faculty, the vice head of faculty, the five departmental chairs as well as student representatives. All major decisions on changes in the study programmes go through the faculty board before being approved at faculty meetings. There is a program chair for each programme who in some cases also is a department chair.

The Faculty offers 27 study programmes at the undergraduate and graduate levels (Appendix 1, Table 1). Many of these are new because of recent changes of legislation on teacher education, resulting in some major changes in the requirements for a Teachers licence:

- One licence valid for all school levels instead of separate ones for Pre-school, Compulsory school and Upper-secondary school
- Minimum requirement in education studies is 60 ECTS (instead of 120 or 60)
- Minimum requirement in subject fields is 90 ECTS for Compulsory school teachers and equivalent of a Bachelor degree (120 – 180 ECTS) for Upper secondary school teachers
- A new 120 ECTS degree at the master level, MT was introduced. The MT degree does not require a 30-credit thesis.

The Faculty currently has 26 academic teaching positions (23.5 full time equivalent, FTE) (Appendix 1, Table 2), of which 58% are women. Of the academic teaching positions 2 are Adjunct Lectures (2 FTE) and 6 Full Professors (5 FTE). A total of 92% of the academic staff are over 50 years of age. In addition, there are 13 people in short term adjunct positions and several sessional teachers who are involved in teaching in the Faculty.

The number of students and their progress through the study programs varies a great deal between them (Appendix 1, Table 3). The intake rate has been increasing in recent years following a decline after teacher education was prolonged to 5 years in 2008 (effective in 2011).

Since 2020 – 2021 students have the possibility to enrol in MT programmes which has resulted in many students transferring from M.Ed. programmes and also in re-enrolment of former students who had never completed their studies as they had not written their master thesis.

In 2020-2021 the number of students was 873, thereof 423 were undergraduate students and 450 postgraduate students.

## **Summary and Main Conclusions for the Faculty**

### **Lessons learned from QEF1**

The Faculty has not had a subject-level review before. The Faculty of Teacher Education had a review in 2014 and then an action plan was written. Among the planned actions was the revision of the faculty's policy on teaching and research but this was postponed due to the planned changes in faculty organization at the School of Education.

In 2015 the Faculty of Teacher Education had to make severe cuts in the number of subject courses given due to a decrease in the number of students which gradually took place after the teacher education was extended to five years. This led to the revision of all programmes for compulsory school teachers.

Regular revision of learning outcomes was in the last action plan of the former Faculty of Teacher Education. Revisions and changes in learning outcomes were made when the faculty was formed in 2018 and this work was further developed when new MT programmes were created following the change in the law on teacher education. Significant changes were made at the bachelor level in all programmes educating compulsory school teachers during 2020-2022 and in that process learning outcomes for most programmes were revised.

Many smaller actions were suggested in the last Subject-level review, some of them were carried out and changes made but in a few cases the actions did not have a positive impact and were later reversed.

### **Teaching and Learning**

The many changes that teacher education has gone through during the last decade have resulted in constant revisions of most courses and programmes. This work, however, needs to be completed once the Ministry of Education and Children has issued its regulation, which is estimated to happen in fall of 2022. Some programmes have already revised their learning outcomes during this review, but others will do this during 2022-2023. Faculty members are very dedicated to making this change as successful as possible and they have a unique insight into the needs of the school system regarding educating subject teachers. During the last three years many faculty meetings have evolved around these issues. In the spring 2022 two faculty meetings have been used discussing drafts for new master programmes for compulsory school teachers for the school year 2023 – 2024.

During the current review course evaluations were discussed and it seems that they are not used systematically in most programmes, i.e. it is largely up to the individual teacher how they are used. It also became clear that they are not so useful because very few students answer them. It is therefore necessary to find other ways to collaborate with students on the quality

of courses. Among possibilities discussed are: i) teachers should make their own questions in the course evaluations and erase irrelevant questions, ii) students should be encouraged to consider the learning outcomes of courses and evaluate if the teaching is helping them reach those outcomes, iii) have midterm conversations with the students and discuss the course. It is clearly a strength of the faculty that most teachers are very interested in communicating and collaborating with students on the quality of teaching and learning.

Directly related to student wishes we need to find ways to standardize workload in courses and to share syllabi among teachers to increase awareness of content and workload.

Implementation of in-field practice needs to be discussed with students. This is, however, something that must be done in collaboration with the Faculty of Education and Pedagogy.

### Management of Research

The current research policy 2020 to 2024 was developed in accordance with the policy of the University of Iceland. It sets the agenda for education research and introduces milestones for the implementation of the research strategy. The quality, scope and impact of the research conducted at the School of Education has strengthened considerably in the last few years. In 2019, the University of Iceland was recognized for the first time on The Times Higher Education Ranking as one of the top 400 universities in the field of educational sciences. In 2020 and 2021 the SOE has maintained this success. It is important to ensure continued development of educational research and educational innovation. The uniqueness and strengths of the School of Education build on the interdisciplinary approach and the strong ties that researchers have with the professional fields that are educated at the SOE.

Annually the academic staff report their research publications and activities via the Evaluation System for Public Universities which provides an overview of the quantity and quality of academic output. Academic staff receive credits based on their annual reports and receive a bonus payment according to their academic performance. Peer-reviewed publications are the results of a rigorous process with regards to data solicitation, originality and scientific contribution. Furthermore, staff can register reports, surveys, as well as educational material developed in collaboration with the professional field. This, however, generally gives fewer credits than peer-reviewed publications, but has a significant social impact for the educational field in Iceland.

Faculty of Subject Teacher Education's research output in peer reviewed journals is slightly lower than the average of SOE and some of the Faculty members produce very little in terms peer reviewed articles (Appendix 1, Table 4). There are many reasons for this, one being that many members of the faculty spend time on developmental work with schools and they devote much of their time to teaching. The faculty has not been very successful in receiving large grants from the Icelandic National Research Funds or other competitive funds. However, some faculty members have received Nordplus grants to organize conferences for teachers and visits to Nordic countries.

The School of Education aims at supporting all educational levels in Iceland - that means not only supporting students and teachers that work in the system but also the families of the

children and by empowering the formal, in-formal, and non-formal educational settings. Also, by working with the total system (not only the schools but ministries, municipalities, etc.) the research done within the SOE impacts the policies regarding the bigger picture of education and wellbeing of students in Iceland and in Europe through international projects.

Members of the Faculty have worked directly with the Directorate of Education on the interpretation of PISA results for Iceland and have written chapters in the Icelandic report on PISA for the years 2015 and 2018.

As mentioned before some members of the Faculty of Subject Teacher Education work with teachers in schools, both on developmental work and research. The Faculty is very active in Professional Development (PD) of Teacher, offering many of its courses to teachers that want to learn more in a specific subject and in creating special courses for teachers. In the last 1 – 2 years many faculty members have participated in the creation/translation of courses in *Menntafléttan* which is a huge PD programme recently initiated and funded by the Ministry of Education and Children.

### Follow-up Processes

The implementation of the Action Plan will be a standing item on meetings of the Faculty Board and similarly Faculty Head will report on the progress regularly to the School Board. Faculty Head reports formally to the School Dean on the status of the implementation and plans for next year together with other relevant QA matters no later than 1 December and this will be followed up in the School Board. The School Dean will subsequently make use of this report in a status report for all Faculties in the School, which will be submitted to the Quality Committee no later than 15 January. The Quality Committee writes a short report to the Rector no later than 1 February, which will subsequently be discussed in a meeting between the Chair of the Quality Committee, the Director of Quality Management and Rector, Vice-Rectors. Deans of Schools and the Managing Director of the Central Administration.

## Appendix 1. Key Figures.

**Table 1. Overview of present Study Programmes within the Faculty**

Name of Study Programme	Cycle <sup>1</sup>	Degree	Credits (ECTS)	Chapter
KEN121 Teaching Studies for Certified Master Tradesmen	1.1	Diploma	60 ECTS	2.1
KEN241 Vocational Education and Training (VET) Pedagogy	1.2	B.Ed.	120 ECTS	2.1
LVG261 Arts Teaching in Compulsory School	1.2	B.Ed.	180 ECTS	2.3
ÍET262 Foreign Language Teaching in Compulsory School	1.2	B.Ed.	180 ECTS	2.4
ÍET261 Icelandic Teaching in Compulsory School	1.2	B.Ed.	180 ECTS	2.5
SNU264 Information Technology Teaching in Compulsory School	1.2	B.Ed.	180 ECTS	2.6
SNU261 Mathematics Teaching in Compulsory School	1.2	B.Ed.	180 ECTS	2.8
SNU263 Natural Sciences Teaching in Compulsory School	1.2	B.Ed.	180 ECTS	2.7
SFG261 Social Science Teaching in Compulsory School	1.2	B.Ed.	180 ECTS	2.9
LVG341 Arts Education	2.1	M.T.	120 ECTS	2.3
LVG441 Arts Education	2.2	M.Ed.	120 ECTS	2.3
ÍET341 Foreign Language Education	2.1	M.T.	120 ECTS	2.4
ÍET442 Foreign Language Education	2.2	M.Ed.	120 ECTS	2.4
ÍET342 Teaching Icelandic	2.1	M.T.	120 ECTS	2.5
ÍET441 Teaching Icelandic	2.2	M.Ed.	120 ECTS	2.5
SNU343 Teaching Information Technology	2.1	M.T.	120 ECTS	2.6
SNU444 Teaching Information Technology	2.2	M.Ed.	120 ECTS	2.6
SNU341 Teaching Mathematics	2.1	M.T.	120 ECTS	2.8
SNU441 Teaching Mathematics	2.2	M.Ed.	120 ECTS	2.8
SNU342 Teaching Natural Sciences	2.1	M.T.	120 ECTS	2.7
SNU443 Teaching Natural Sciences	2.2	M.Ed.	120 ECTS	2.7
SFG341 Teaching Social Sciences	2.1	M.T.	120 ECTS	2.9
SFG441 Teaching Social Sciences	2.2	M.Ed.	120 ECTS	2.9
MFK321 Upper Secondary School Teaching	2.1	Postgrad.Dip.	60 ECTS	2.10



MFK441 Upper Secondary Teaching	School	2.2	MA	120 ECTS	2.10
MFK442 Upper Secondary Teaching	School	2.2	MS	120 ECTS	2.10
MFK443 Upper Secondary Teaching	School	2.2	M.Ed.	120 ECTS	2.10

<sup>1</sup> See National Qualification Framework for Higher Education No. 530/2011.

**Table 2. Faculty members as of 1 March 2021, number (No.) and full time-equivalent (FTE).**

	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	FTE	No.	FTE	No.	FTE
Professors	3	1.98	3	3	6	5.0
Associate Professors	5	3.98	4	3.49	9	7.5
Assistant Professors	3	3	6	6	9	9
Adjunct Lectures (permanent position)	0	0	2	2	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>23.5</b>

**Table 3. Total number of students, number of entrants, retention rate for first year, and completion rate (4-year mean).**

Programme	No. of students			No. of entrants <sup>3</sup>	Retention rate	No. of graduates	Completion rate <sup>4</sup>
	Total no.	Full time <sup>1</sup>	Part time <sup>2</sup>				
FAG321	37.0	6.5	24.5	24.7	76%	3.0	100%
ÍET261	31.7	20.7	10.3	14.0	91%	5.5	71%
ÍET262	35.0	20.0	12.7	16.3	96%	6.5	77%
ÍET341	25.0	17.0	8.0	7.0	-	-	-
ÍET342	20.0	14.0	6.0	10.0	-	-	-
ÍET441	20.0	6.3	8.3	6.0	93%	4.0	67%
ÍET442	21.7	8.7	8.3	6.3	-	5.5	-
KEN121	45.3	5.0	36.3	31.7	76%	15.3	87%
KEN241	6.0	1.5	4.0	1.0	100%	1.0	0%
LVG261	37.7	21.3	11.0	16.3	96%	5.7	92%
LVG341	54.0	28.0	26.0	29.0	-	-	-
LVG441	36.7	16.3	12.3	16.7	92%	5.7	57%
SFG261	58.7	38.7	14.0	28.0	91%	5.0	71%
SFG341	58.0	23.0	35.0	33.0	-	-	-
SFG441	63.3	29.0	19.7	20.7	-	11.0	46%
SNU261	53.3	36.3	11.3	25.3	90%	4.5	61%
SNU263	17.5	11.0	5.0	12.5	77%	1.0	0%

SNU264	5.5	3.5	3.0	5.5	50%	-	-
SNU341	15.0	4.0	11.0	8.0	-	-	-
SNU342	21.0	13.0	8.0	9.0	-	-	-
SNU343	15.0	5.0	8.0	11.0	-	-	-
SNU441	13.7	5.3	6.7	4.0	92%	4.5	88%
SNU443	9.0	3.5	4.5	7.0	80%	-	-
SNU444	6.5	3.0	2.5	5.0	100%	-	-

<sup>1</sup> > 22.5 ECTS completed. For Ph.D. students > 1 ECTS completed.

<sup>2</sup> 1-22 ECTS completed.

<sup>3</sup> For all programmes except Ph.D., no. of students completing at least one examination in first term.

<sup>4</sup> 2-year rate for diploma, 4-year rate for B.A./B.S., 3-year rate for M.A./M.S., 5-year rate for Ph.D.

**Table 4. Research output of Faculty members, based on the Evaluation System for the Public Universities in Iceland, expressed by mean total research points (A) and mean research points from peer-reviewed publications only (B) calculated per employee.**

	2017		2018		2019		2020		Mean	
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
Faculty	20.2	8.3	28.4	17.2	20.1	10.1	22.7	14.1	22.8	12.4
School	22.6	12.0	32.9	18.1	25.3	13.4	26.1	15.3	26.7	14.7
University	29.6	19.4	31.6	21.9	28.5	19.5	27.0	21.6	29.2	20.6

## Appendix 2. Action Plan for Teaching and Learning and Management of Research in QEF2

	Actions	How	Deadlines	Responsible party
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### 1. FACULTY LEVEL

Ch. 1.2	Faculty Characteristics			
1	Increase the number of academic staff	Applications to the School of Education to advertise for more staff	Fall 2022	Head of faculty
2	Continue to work on reorganization of master studies	Plan for master studies to be discussed at Faculty meetings	Fall 2022	Head of faculty and departmental chairs
Ch. 1.3	Academic Vision			
1	Form academic vision for a) teaching b) research	Academic vision	2024	Faculty
Ch. 1.4	Student Support			
1	Improve information from the Faculty on the structure of our programmes	Booklet for students or information on website	Spring 2023	Faculty head and programme chairs

### 2. DEPARTMENTS AND STUDY PROGRAMMES

#### General to all study programmes

Ch. 2	General issues			
1	Discuss implementation of practicum courses	Possible changes in practicum courses	Fall 2023	Faculty
2	Find ways to standardize workload in courses	Directions for teachers	Fall 2023	Faculty
3	Find ways to share syllabi among teachers	Technical solution for sharing syllabi	Fall 2023	Faculty
4	Discuss implementation of group work	Directions for students and teachers	Fall 2022	Faculty
5	Course evaluation, midterm discussion with students	Plan for midterm discussions	Fall 2022	Faculty
6	Find ways to increase student participation in Faculty meetings		Fall 2023	Faculty

#### KEN121 and KEN241

Ch. 2.1.1	Students			
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1	Deciding on ways for student recruitment and the future of the KEN241 programme. Despite efforts to increase participation, recruitment remains low. An analysis of the situation and possibilities moving forward is needed before decisions are made concerning its future.	An analysis of the possible ways to either recruit more students or change the programme which can be used as a base for further action.	Fall 2024	Director of the programme ( <i>námsleiðarformaður</i> ), head of the Upper secondary school teaching programmes ( <i>námsbrautarformaður</i> ), head of the faculty of subject teacher education ( <i>deildarforseti</i> )
2	Finding ways to involve students in the management of the programmes. Also need to include more explicit opportunities for students to review and discuss the program.	Student representative recruited to either (1) study committee or (2) meetings of the Upper secondary school teaching faculty. A time in a required course set aside to discuss the program at least once a year.	Spring 2023	Director of the programme, head of the Upper secondary school teaching programs
3	A more formal structure of meetings with students in KEN241 is needed and reviewing the program needs to be more explicit goal.	Meetings with students in KEN241 is formalized and established as taking place early each semester. Reviewing the program is an agenda item.	Fall 2022	Director of the program
4	A discussion on course evaluation and quality of the program needs to be explicitly on the agenda when the teachers involved in the two programs meet annually.	A common understanding and use of course evaluation established through discussion (reported in meeting notes).	Fall 2022	Director of the program
<b>Ch. 2.1.2</b>	<b>Teaching and Learning</b>			
1	Evaluate changes made to the structure of KEN121. Both through information from teachers and	A report on the results of the changes delivered to the faculty and	Fall 2024	Director of the programme

	students (group interviews).	discussed in a meeting of the Upper secondary school teaching faculty.		
2	Necessary to find ways get more academic staff directly involved in discussing and developing these programmes.	A formal administrative structure in place for discussing and developing the programmes.	Spring 2023	Director of the programme, head of the Upper secondary school teaching programmes, head of the faculty of subject teacher education.
3	Establish a formal annual meeting (in the fall before revision of the course catalogue) of the teachers involved in the two programmes. During those meetings learning outcomes will be revised and reviewed, assessment practices, course workload, and the use of student feedback discussed.	A fall meeting with teachers involved in the programmes focuses on course content, learning outcomes, assessment practices, course workload, and student feedback.	Fall 2022	Director of the programme
<b>Ch. 2.1.3</b>	<b>Coordination between teaching and research</b>			
1	A discussion on content and its connection to current research is on the agenda when the teachers involved in the two programs meet annually.	A common understanding of content and connection to current research established through discussion (reported in meeting notes).	Fall 2022	Director of the program
2	In meetings of the Upper secondary school teaching faculty there is a discussion on research relevant to the programmes, with the aim of both (a) updating modules and reading lists and (b) involving those doing relevant research in courses through for example guest lectures.	Discussion on relevant research and possible updates in content and reading (reported in meeting notes).	Spring 2023	Director of the programme, head of the Upper secondary school teaching programs

**Icelandic (ÍET261, ÍET342, ÍET441)**

<b>Ch. 2.5.1</b>	<b>Students</b>			
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1	More involvement of the students in the decision making within the programme about their studies.			
2	Regular meetings with the students to create a study community.			